United Nations A/AC.198/2013/3

General Assembly

Distr.: General
12 February 2013

Original: English

Committee on Information
Thirty-fifth session
22 April-2 May 2013

Activities of the Department of Public Information: news services

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report, prepared in response to General Assembly resolution 67/124 B, provides a summary of the key advances made by the Department of Public Information from July 2012 to February 2013 in promoting the work of the United Nations to the global audience through its news services.

As part of its news services, which is one of three subprogrammes of the Department and implemented by its News and Media Division, the Department creates and broadcasts multimedia products on the work of the United Nations at Headquarters and around the world. It provides support services to journalists and monitors the media coverage of United Nations-related issues.

The activities under the other subprogrammes of the Department, namely strategic communications services and outreach services, are described in separate reports of the Secretary-General (A/AC.198/2013/2 and A/AC.198/2013/4, respectively).

13-23046 (E) 250213

Please recycle

I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 67/124 B, the General Assembly took note of the reports of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Department of Public Information submitted for consideration by the Committee on Information at its thirty-fourth session and requested the Secretary-General to continue to report to the Committee on the activities of the Department.

2. In the same resolution, the General Assembly called upon the Department to provide specific information on a number of its activities. The Bureau of the Committee on Information advised the Department to present the information requested in three parts, in accordance with the three subprogrammes of the Department: strategic communications services, news services and outreach services.

3. The present report, which covers the news- and media-related activities of the Department, highlights progress made in the area of radio, television, video, photographic, print and Internet services to the media and other users globally. A particular focus of the report is UNifeed, the Internet-based video news service of the Department.

4. Unless otherwise indicated, the report covers the activities of the Department for the period from July 2012 to February 2013.

II. News services

A. Overview

5. Telling the United Nations story to a global audience by delivering news, features and a wealth of related content through an effective combination of traditional media and new Internet- and mobile-based platforms remained a major focus of the Department as it continued to bolster the multilingual aspect of its products and services.

6. The Department's strategy involved enhancing the scope and depth of its multimedia programming and online news coverage, expanding the network of partner broadcasters carrying its television and radio programmes in different languages and actively engaging social networks to reach broader audiences across the globe while generating additional interest in the content programmes produced for traditional media. Among the most recent examples, segments of the Department's flagship television feature series, *21st Century*, are now translated into Chinese and Turkish, and United Nations Radio's programming in Bangla has been revitalized and its web page upgraded. In another notable development, the Department has completed the redesign of all six official language versions of the United Nations News Centre portal, harmonizing their appearance and functionalities.

7. The Department continues to provide strong support to Member States through its news and media products and services. When resources permit, the Department's webcasting operations now post video footage on the United Nations Web TV website (http://webtv.un.org) of speakers organized by country. This allows users around the world to search, embed and share statements made at United Nations

meetings and events by representatives of each country. The clips are, when possible, made available in English and the original language. News articles and features produced by the United Nations News Centre are available through RSS feeds and are frequently used to provide content for the websites of permanent missions to the United Nations. The Department also continues to work with Member States to expand the distribution of United Nations news products, develop co-productions on priority issues and provide content for State broadcasters, including TV5 (France), the South African Broadcasting Corporation and the Turkish Radio and Television Corporation.

B. United Nations Radio

8. United Nations Radio continued to improve the thematic scope and depth of its coverage while working to broaden its audiences around the world through new partnerships with radio stations, further enhancement of its website and more effective use of social media to increase its reach. Its core programming, produced in the six official languages, as well as Kiswahili and Portuguese, combined breaking news reports on developments at Headquarters, in the field and around the United Nations system with features and interviews highlighting a wide range of issues on the Organization's agenda. On the web, easy access to audio files was complemented by greater use of video and photos to make the site more engaging and attractive to both individual users and broadcast partners.

9. As part of its efforts to increase the visibility of United Nations Radio, the Department teamed up with the United Nations Postal Administration to launch commemorative postal stamps in New York, Geneva and Vienna in connection with an initiative of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to proclaim 13 February, the day of the establishment of United Nations Radio in 1946, as World Radio Day. The stamps carried codes for smartphones that connected users to a special web page offering access to United Nations Radio programmes in eight languages. The action by the General Assembly to endorse the World Radio Day initiative and the inaugural commemoration of the Day were covered by United Nations Radio in all languages.

10. With multilingualism remaining a key focus in its activities, the Department added enhanced news bulletins to United Nations Radio's weekly programmes in Bangla. It also upgraded the Bangla web page, adding a direct link to it from United Nations Radio's home page in eight languages (all six official languages, as well as Kiswahili and Portuguese). Similar enhancements are under way for the programming and web pages in Hindi and Urdu.

11. Highlights of United Nations Radio coverage included:

(a) *The sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly*. The general debate and related high-level events received prominent coverage, including a series of interviews with Heads of State and other visiting officials that were broadcast in different languages. To improve user experience, all language versions of the United Nations Radio website included links to the texts of speeches made by leaders during the debate;

(b) *The Syrian Arab Republic*. Efforts by the United Nations, including the activities of the Joint Special Representative of the United Nations and the League

of Arab States for Syria, remained a key focus of coverage in all languages, with the Arabic Unit dedicating a special thematic web page to the crisis;

(c) *The Democratic Republic of the Congo*. The rebellion by the Mouvement du 23 mars (M23) fighters in the Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo in 2012 and 2013 was covered by all language units, with special focus on the security, humanitarian and peacekeeping challenges in addition to features on the impact of the situation on women and children;

(d) *Peacekeeping and political missions*. Reporting on United Nations peacekeeping operations and peacemaking efforts in the world's hotspots constituted a major part of United Nations Radio's programming, which highlighted relevant actions by the Security Council and the work of various United Nations field missions, including those in Afghanistan, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lebanon, Liberia, Somalia, South Sudan and the Sudan;

(e) *Climate change*. The impact of Hurricane Sandy on Haiti and the Caribbean, as well as on United Nations Headquarters in New York, received wide coverage, as did a range of issues related to climate change and disaster prevention;

(f) *Other areas of news and feature coverage*. These included the inaugural Day of the Girl Child and developments related to sustainable development and the post-2015 agenda.

12. The Department's ongoing efforts to expand its radio audiences, both online and through various partnership arrangements with radio stations, yielded measurable results. The Department also continued to explore innovative arrangements with broadcasters to bring the latest news about the work of the Organization directly to their audiences, in part through live updates on key developments at the United Nations by United Nations Radio staff.

13. United Nations Radio's list of partners in different parts of the world continued to grow, reaching a total of 646 in December 2012. The new stations and websites carrying United Nations Radio programmes spanned many countries: Argentina (Agencia Pulsar, Radio del Sur); Brazil (Radio Justica, Radio Rural, MidiaUM); Canada (AM1320 Vancouver); Cape Verde (Bonpkulu Pulitiku website); Ecuador (Radio Éxtasis); France (Radio Afa); Mozambique (Radio Cidade de Maputo); Spain (Escuela de Radio TEA FM, Onda 87 radio, A Gravidez website); and United States of America (Mobile Radio Network in Los Angeles, California).

14. On social media outlets, the number of United Nations Radio followers increased in all six official languages. On Sina Weibo, more than 200,000 fans follow Chinese Radio, which ranks second among more than 20 United Nations entities. Altogether, United Nations Radio's Facebook followers amount to more than 30,000, while the number of Twitter fans exceeds 80,000.

15. During the reporting period, United Nations Radio's programmes posted online were downloaded more than 800,000 times by listeners and radio stations.

16. United Nations Radio's Portuguese Unit launched a live audio and video report on United Nations-related developments that is featured regularly on the largest all-news network in Brazil, Globo News. This initiative has also increased the Portuguese Unit's visibility on social networks, thanks to Facebook and Twitter posts.

C. United Nations Television

17. Bringing television and video images of the work and priorities of the Organization to the greatest possible audiences remained a major focus of the Department's news-related operations. This included live coverage and feature programming for use by television broadcasters in different parts of the world and the production of varied video material for online distribution through multiple platforms.

Feature programming

18. A major thrust of the work of United Nations Television involved producing multiple-format feature programmes on the activities of the Organization and the issues on its agenda for use by global broadcasters and, increasingly, by web-based platforms as well.

21st Century

19. The Department's flagship monthly television magazine programme, *21st Century*, continued its successful run and is now used by more than 60 international broadcast outlets with an audience reach in the hundreds of millions. The programme has garnered nearly 20 awards, and its line-up includes reports from more than 90 countries and nearly 200 feature-length stories. During the reporting period, the programme featured reports from 13 countries that focused on such issues as securing rights for persons with disabilities; rising cancer rates in Africa; youth empowerment in Pakistan; migration in Europe; and protecting women's rights in Tunisia. In an effort to build on newer technologies and new viewing trends, significant efforts have also been made to place the programme on web-based and digital platforms and to create additional related multimedia products from *21st Century* feature content for placement on websites and for distribution through social media.

20. As it worked to expand the thematic and geographical scope of its features coverage, the programme continued to improve its partnerships and co-production arrangements with United Nations agencies, funds and programmes and with external partners. During the reporting period alone, it produced four stories with the United Nations Democracy Fund and three with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women). The show also built on its existing relationships with major television networks and secured a co-production deal with the Public Broadcasting Service for a feature on a group of young people from poor townships in South Africa who are realizing their dreams of singing opera professionally. Excerpts from *21st Century* stories were also featured in a special UN-Women video with its Executive Director. *21st Century* feature stories are also placed on the websites of other United Nations entities to ensure an even wider reach.

21. In an innovative and exciting new partnership, the Department developed a French-language version of *21st Century* in collaboration with the French broadcaster TV5 Monde. The show, entitled *21ème Siècle*, has wide global reach through distribution to stations throughout Europe, Latin America, Africa, Asia and North America. A website for the programme was established on the TV5 Monde website and receives considerable traffic. The collaborative model is now being

used as a template for future versions in other languages. To further enhance multilingualism, many of the individual *21st Century* feature segments are also translated into Turkish for broadcast on national outlets, as well as into Chinese for placement on the heavily trafficked Chinese social networking site Sina Weibo. Efforts are also under way to offer the Chinese versions to Chinese broadcast outlets.

22. Building on the success of earlier projects, the Department continued its series of screenings of United Nations Television films. An event organized in December by the News and Media Division and the Museum of Tolerance at the Simon Wiesenthal Center featured the award-winning film *Bosnia: Healing the Wounds of War*. The film was also featured at screenings at the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the European Parliament. Another award-winning film produced by United Nations Television, *Cambodia: A Quest for Justice*, was shown in October at the Rutgers University Center for the Study of Genocide, Conflict Resolution and Human Rights at an event that included a panel discussion with the filmmaker and a senior official from the Office of Legal Affairs of the Secretariat. A screening was also held at the New York University Global Studies Program.

UN in Action

23. Produced in all six official languages, *UN in Action* is a television series that puts a human face on the work of the United Nations and its agencies, funds and programmes around the world. The goal of the series is to raise awareness and understanding of all the activities of the United Nations across the globe, which are often overlooked by the mainstream media.

24. During the reporting period, an average of 80 broadcast partners on all continents requested *UN in Action* videos in all six official languages through an on-demand service. A special effort was made to distribute the Chinese version of *UN in Action* on social media sites, such as Sina Weibo. To expand the scope and variety of *UN in Action* programmes, the Department collaborated with United Nations agencies and peacekeeping missions to obtain additional video content without extra cost. Over the past months, it succeeded in securing the active engagement of such agencies and missions as the International Atomic Energy Agency, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization and the United Nations University to increase their support and contributions to the series.

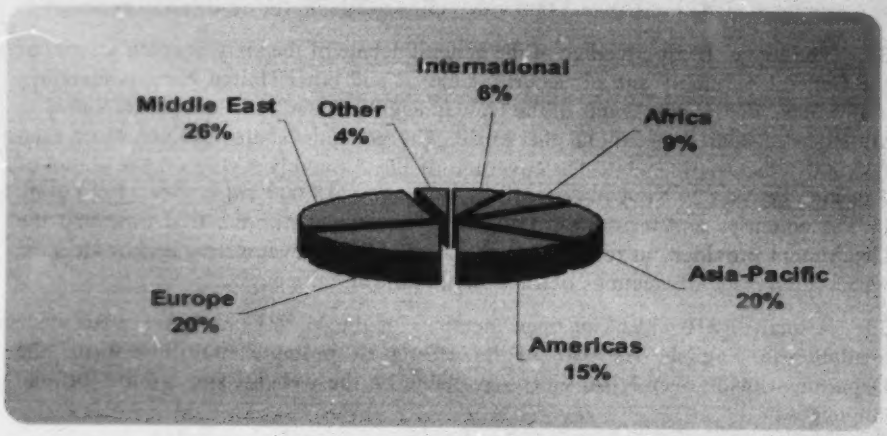
Live coverage

25. United Nations Television provides gavel-to-gavel broadcast-quality live feeds to broadcasters around the world of the meetings of the General Assembly and the Security Council, other intergovernmental meetings and major events, as well as press conferences and media encounters at Headquarters in New York and the United Nations Office at Geneva. Coverage was also made available through the United Nations Television channel, as well as on United Nations Web TV. During the general debate in 2012, United Nations Television covered some 170 events with simultaneous live feeds of over 30 hours a day on certain days.

UNifeed

26. UNifeed delivered video news stories six days a week through Associated Press Television to more than 1,000 broadcast points globally, with content from Headquarters and more than 40 agencies, funds and programmes and peacekeeping missions. Select stories were also distributed by Reuters TV and the European Broadcasting Union (see figure I).

Figure I
UNifeed clients by region, November 2012



27. In addition, UNifeed made broadcast-quality videos available on its website, which registered more than 4,600 users, comprising media professionals, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), Government agencies and educational institutions. Some UNifeed content was downloaded from its website and redistributed further through online platforms and social media, especially in Asia. For example, during the reporting period, several stories originally downloaded by the Xinhua News Agency were then redownloaded hundreds of times.

28. Over the summer, UNifeed registered a significant peak in usage due to its coverage of the Syrian conflict. One story with exclusive footage from the ground registered an unprecedented 3,500 on-air broadcasts, monitored through the watermarking system Teletrax, and web downloads.

Webcasting

29. The Department, through its United Nations webcast operation, continued to improve its live and on-demand streaming services to a global audience capitalizing on the new features and functionalities offered by its redesigned website (http://webtv.un.org). The redesigned site, launched in June 2012, provided improved user experience with live and on-demand video content, including better performance, video quality and search and browsing capabilities. The latter provided easy and direct access to statements by representatives of each Member State made during official meetings of various United Nations bodies, at press encounters or at other major events. By the end of January 2013, the Department's webcast service produced over 1,500 such videos in total, with remarks by

individual representatives easily accessible through an alphabetical playlist featuring all Member States.

30. The website incorporates smart and accessible technology that detects the user's device (computer or mobile, including iPads and iPhones) and delivers the appropriate video format. It includes tools for sharing videos through social media networks, such as Facebook and Twitter, and for copying and "embedding" any video from the United Nations webcast site. A special tutorial video was created in all six official languages to help new visitors familiarize themselves with the functionalities of the redesigned site. Overall, during the reporting period, the webcast team made more than 5,000 video clips available for on-demand access.

31. The live webcast coverage of the general debate of the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly and of Security Council and other United Nations meetings and events, including sessions of the Human Rights Council in Geneva, continued to attract large audiences around the world. The general debate received more than 635,000 video views, while the coverage of the Assembly's vote on the status of Palestine held on 29 November received more than 118,000 video views from users in 174 countries and territories. The current session marks the first time that the Department provided, in response to the Assembly's decision, live and on-demand webcast coverage of meetings of all of the Main Committees.

32. A total of 210 videos of open meetings of the Main Committees were made available in English. As part of its efforts to promote multilingualism, the Department made over 1,100 videos available on the webcast site in other official languages.

33. The Department also used its webcast service to facilitate internal communication through cost-effective live streaming of town hall meetings with senior United Nations officials at Headquarters and staff at various locations worldwide, as well as for training, workshops and other internal events.

United Nations channel on YouTube

34. The audience of the United Nations channel on YouTube (www.youtube.com/unitednations) grew measurably over the reporting period, with a cumulative total of video views exceeding 6 million and the number of subscribers and friends at more than 34,000. More than 2,400 videos have been made available on the United Nations channel, with content updated on a daily basis.

D. Photos and audiovisual archives

United Nations Photo

35. Demand for United Nations Photo coverage continued to grow during the reporting period. More than 1,000 assignments were undertaken during that period, including the Secretary-General's visits to 20 countries, resulting in about 4,400 images — an increase of more than one third compared with the previous reporting period — being selected and made available to the public in high resolution on the United Nations Photo website. An additional 18,000 images were added to the photo database and were provided upon request to the permanent missions and members of the public through the photo library.

36. More than 563,000 unique page views of the United Nations Photo website were registered in September 2012 — an increase of nearly 20 per cent compared with September 2011. The average time spent per visit was more than 12 minutes, highlighting the significant interest in the general debate and the rich photo collection available online.

37. United Nations Photo continued to grow in popularity on social media. The number of cumulative views on Flickr is poised to exceed 2.7 million by early 2013, nearly double the figure from the previous year. Similar growth is registered in the number of Facebook fans, now surpassing 23,000.

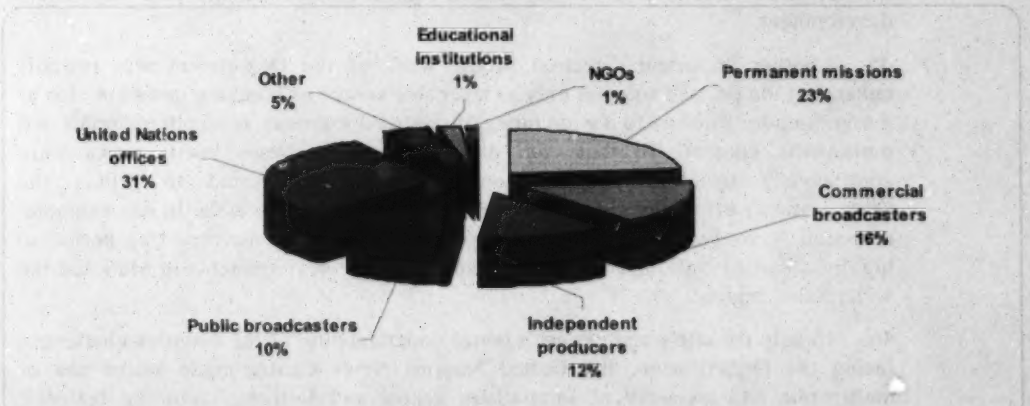
38. In addition to current coverage, the Department is working to make legacy photos documenting the work of the Organization available to the public in digital format. An additional 3,500 of these legacy images were digitized, retouched when necessary, captioned and made available to the public during the reporting period.

39. Meanwhile, traditional outreach efforts continued to generate positive outcomes. An exhibition of United Nations photos was held in September 2012 in Cologne, Germany, at Fotokina, a global imaging industry fair that attracted more than 180,000 visitors from 166 countries. The 49 images on display illustrated the compelling work and history of the Organization since its founding. Many United Nations information centres around the world reproduced the display in various formats, and civil society partners expressed their intention to support such exhibitions in the future.

Audiovisual archives and library services

40. The audiovisual library continued to provide an important service to delegations, the media and members of the public, as well as United Nations organizations. The library saw a 15 per cent year-on-year increase in the number of requests for videos and films during the reporting period, while the number of its registered clients reached 5,000 (see figure II).

Figure II
Clients served by type, United Nations visual library, November 2012



41. The Department continued its efforts to seek support for the long-term preservation of its unique audiovisual archives collection. A partnership with the United Nations Foundation during the reporting period enabled the Department to digitize the audio recordings of all United Nations concerts held at Headquarters since the 1950s.

42. The capital master plan and the imminent arrival of the media asset management system have presented both opportunities and challenges. The Department carried out an archive inventory project to prepare for the move under the capital master plan to a new permanent location and for the possibility of mass digitization — when funding is available — to take advantage of the system and make digital material easily and widely accessible.

E. United Nations News Centre

43. Continuing to serve as the main online gateway for news about the United Nations, the multilingual United Nations News Centre portal, and the associated United Nations News Service, marked a new stage in its development with the revamping of its home page in all six official languages. The new design improved the site's navigation and usability, made the site more attractive visually and provided ease of access to multimedia content. In line with current trends, the site was optimized for easy viewing on handheld mobile devices, including cell phones and tablets. The new design also enhanced language parity and for the first time established a consistent look and feel to the different language versions of the United Nations News Centre.

44. A major thrust of efforts was aimed at enhancing editorial coherence across all languages and ensuring that various versions of the portal provided timely, accurate and balanced reporting on major developments around the United Nations system while taking into account the audiences' regional and national interests and concerns. The opening of the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly and the related high-level events received in-depth coverage, as did United Nations efforts to address various situations, including in Mali, the Syrian Arab Republic and the Middle East, and such issues as human rights, climate change and sustainable development.

45. Another important direction in the work of the Department was towards enhancing the portal's role not only as a reliable source of breaking news but also as a user-friendly gateway to a wide range of related documents, in-depth materials and multimedia content. To that end, existing thematic News Focus pages were continuously updated, and additional pages were created to reflect the Organization's efforts to address new crises or issues on its agenda. In one example, a special News Focus page on Mali was launched during the reporting period to highlight United Nations activities in response to the developments in Mali and the wider Sahel region.

46. To help the site's visitors get a better understanding of the complex challenges facing the Organization, the United Nations News Centre made active use of multimedia and an array of journalistic genres and formats, including features, photo essays and in-depth and reaction interviews. Special photo stories were produced to highlight a wide range of issues, including the transition to peace in Somalia, the situation in the Sahel, World AIDS Day and the International Day for

the Elimination of Violence Against Women. Under the "Newsmakers" rubric, the English and French versions of the portal featured interviews with senior officials of the United Nations, including the President of the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly, Vuk Jeremić, the incoming Deputy Secretary-General, Jan Eliasson, the Executive Director of UN-Women, Michelle Bachelet, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia, Augustine Mahiga, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, Ian Martin, and the Special Adviser on Myanmar, Vijay Nambiar. A series of vox populi video clips helped site visitors experience the atmosphere surrounding the high-level meetings of the General Assembly through the voices — in different languages — of the events' participants, including senior officials of the United Nations and celebrities supporting United Nations-related causes.

47. As efforts to upgrade the portal's content, visual attractiveness and ease of use continued, the United Nations News Centre remained one of the most heavily visited areas of the United Nations website, with traffic data showing overall growth across languages. From 1 September to 21 December 2012, for example, the portal's Chinese-language version registered more than 764,000 page views, which represents a nearly threefold increase over the same period in the previous year. Traffic also grew on the Arabic version, which had over 90,000 page views between September and December 2012, compared to 77,000 in the same period in 2011. At the same time, a wide array of online media outlets and aggregators, such as Google News, Yahoo and AllAfrica.com, as well as Government, educational, business, NGO and special interest websites, regularly posted United Nations News Centre stories on their pages. Websites of various United Nations agencies and permanent missions to the United Nations also used United Nations News Centre dispatches to update their sites about the latest developments around the United Nations system. Outreach through social media has also yielded positive results, in part through the Twitter and Facebook accounts of the portal's English service, which now has 30,000 followers, an increase of more than 100 per cent since 2011.

F. Press releases

48. As a key part of its news-related services, the Department continued to provide fast, accurate and comprehensive coverage of all open intergovernmental meetings and press conferences at Headquarters and other locations. Between July and December 2012, the Meetings Coverage Section produced a total of 2,042 press releases, with 10,867 pages in English and French. This output included meetings coverage summaries (701), other press releases (995) and briefings and press conferences (346). In a further effort to enhance efficiency, the Department reduced by half the number of printed copies it produced, from a total of 360,000 in 2010 to about 175,000 in 2012.

49. The coverage, which is made available in hard copy at Headquarters and distributed to worldwide audiences through the Internet and the United Nations information centres, included:

(a) A total of 396 press releases relating to the main session of the General Assembly, including meetings of the plenary and its Main Committees from mid-September to December 2012;

(b) A total of 307 press releases covering the Security Council, including a ministerial-level meeting on the peaceful settlement of Middle East conflicts, substantive debates on Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Middle East, post-conflict peacebuilding, children and armed conflict, non-proliferation, peace and security in Africa, the international criminal tribunals, women and peace and security and the protection of civilians, as well as press statements and other press releases;

(c) More than 46 press releases on the Economic and Social Council, including its substantive session held at Headquarters in July 2012;

(d) Some 842 other press releases, including statements, remarks and messages from the Secretary-General and the Deputy Secretary-General, as well as materials from other United Nations offices and departments.

50. The Department continues to explore creative ways to issue press releases in more official languages of the United Nations. While the existing resources do not allow the Department to deliver press releases in other official languages, as had been reported to the Committee previously, the Department continued to explore arrangements that could help to ensure greater linguistic parity in providing quick and easy access to information on the meetings of the General Assembly and its Main Committees. In one such proposal under consideration, the Department would work with the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management to design a database that would provide user-friendly access to an archive of summary records in languages not presently covered by the Department's press releases.

III. Other services

Services to the media: media accreditation and liaison

51. During the general debate of the General Assembly and the high-level meetings, the Department processed about 1,200 media accreditation applications, facilitated 117 photo opportunities with the Secretary-General and various dignitaries and monitored and provided logistics to 47 stakeouts and press conferences and 47 events in the North Lawn Building. It also assisted journalists in the Media Centre and the Media Liaison Desk in the General Assembly Building with the help of 66 volunteers speaking a wide range of languages to better assist the press. More than 418 statements made by representatives of Member States were scanned and distributed electronically to the media. During the same period, 216 special passes were given to press attachés to allow them to escort their national press and official photographers and camera operators to bilateral meetings and other events taking place in restricted areas.

52. From October 2012 to January 2013, the Department's Media Accreditation and Liaison Unit provided accreditation to 930 media representatives and continued to assist the press with their coverage of United Nations activities. It continued to disseminate information about United Nations events through its daily media alert, which is e-mailed to 4,000 recipients. It sent alerts concerning meetings, press releases and key documents through its Twitter account, which targets the press and has more than 7,000 followers.

IV. United Nations website

A. Growing content and improved presentation

53. Continuing its commitment to providing updated multilingual content on the United Nations website (www.un.org), the Department added more than 11,000 new pages in the six official languages. Major recent projects included the redesigned websites of the General Assembly, the Security Council and the *Repertoire of the Practice of the Security Council* in five languages (to complement the earlier-launched English version), as well as the web page of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004), a special online segment featuring the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization and the site of the Office of the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General. A new website was also created for the Ethics Office.

54. Developing web pages for special campaigns and observances remained an important area of activity for the Department, with the latest additions including the "Let's fight racism" campaign of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Secretary-General's Zero Hunger Challenge. All websites were developed in the six official languages and in accordance with the accessibility standards required by the General Assembly.

55. Fulfilling its mandate to cover all special observances declared by the General Assembly, such as international days, weeks, years and anniversaries, the Department updated web pages for World Down Syndrome Day, International Jazz Day, World Elder Abuse Day and the International Day of the Girl Child. It further enhanced the web page for the Rwanda genocide and developed a dynamic online application for the training programme for young Palestinian journalists.

B. Multilingualism: from website development to social media outreach

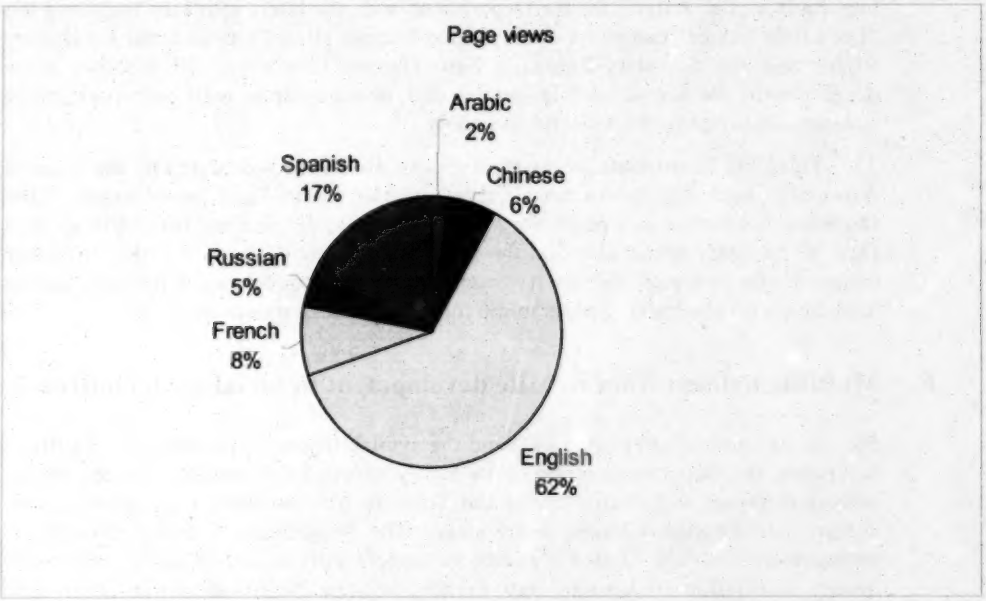
56. In its continuing efforts to expand the availability of its products in all official languages, the Department relied on its highly successful cooperation arrangements with universities in Belarus, China and Spain to help with the translation of web content into Russian, Chinese and Spanish. The Department is also continuing its arrangement with the United Nations Volunteers programme to assist with high-quality translation of content into French, and in 2012 added translation into Chinese, working with four volunteers on a regular basis.

57. The Department's efforts to add content in languages other than English have shown measurable results, with website traffic data indicating a trend towards a more balanced distribution of usage. Whereas in 2005, for example, English pages accounted for 79 per cent of traffic, the proportion went down to 65 per cent in 2011 and further decreased to 62 per cent in 2012 (see figure III). The table below provides detailed information on website traffic by language during 2012.

United Nations website traffic by language, 1 January-30 November 2012

Language	*New visits*	*Total visits*	*Unique visits*	*Page views*	*Pages per visit*
Arabic	656 210	960 323	668 891	2 514 517	2.62
Chinese	2 678 670	3 592 999	2 726 573	7 609 533	2.12
English	17 224 681	29 039 781	17 581 235	78 846 977	2.72
French	2 445 057	4 018 401	2 529 098	10 824 113	2.69
Russian	1 436 228	2 462 875	1 485 306	5 754 746	2.34
Spanish	7 017 499	10 262 188	7 163 636	22 175 716	2.16
Total	**4 830**	**5 948**	**5 920**	**7 448**	**2.44**

Figure III
United Nations website traffic by language, 1 January-30 November 2012



Social media

58. In the light of the growing importance of social networks in various parts of the world, including in developing countries, the Department expanded its outreach in this sphere in all six official languages. In addition to the multilingual United Nations News Centre and United Nations Radio social media accounts, new Twitter and Facebook accounts were launched in Arabic and Russian. To reach wider Russian-speaking audiences, a new account was created on the popular VKontakte platform. Meanwhile, the number of followers of the existing French and Spanish Twitter and Facebook accounts tripled in the past year, with the Facebook account exceeding 20,000 fans in French and the Spanish Facebook and Twitter accounts reaching 47,000 fans and 50,000 followers, respectively.

59. For the Chinese-speaking audience, the Department continued and strengthened its cooperation with Sina Weibo, reaching nearly 3.25 million followers, the highest of any of the United Nations social media outlets. The Department capitalized on that interest to inform the public about a variety of events at the United Nations during the main part of the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly. A major expansion of the Sina Weibo audience occurred in July 2012, when the Secretary-General participated in a live conversation with young people through the social media platform. More than 20 million people watched the live broadcast of the conversation, and the event's web page was viewed 50 million times on the day itself, according to statistics provided by Sina Weibo. Similarly, a campaign on the theme "The future we want" elicited more than 200,000 messages from people sharing their vision for the future on Weibo, and a joint campaign with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs for World Humanitarian Day generated 60,000 reposts by Weibo followers.

60. The number of views of YouTube videos posted on the United Nations channels in French and Spanish multiplied, owing in part to the increased number of links to them from www.un.org. The views on the French channel doubled to 160,000, while the views on the Spanish channel increased fivefold, to 120,000. More than 160 videos were adapted into Chinese and posted to Youku, Tudou and Sina Video. The most popular video in Chinese reached 5 million views within 24 hours of posting.

C. Accessibility

61. The Department continued to work to make the United Nations website increasingly accessible to persons with disabilities, in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly. The Department has developed technical standards to assist departments and offices across the Secretariat in producing accessible web content and continues to assist with compliance with those standards. The standards were compiled and made available on a user-friendly website on the United Nations system-wide Intranet.

62. The Department also continued its efforts to make newly created sites accessible on mobile devices, which are increasingly becoming the main gateway to online content for many users around the world. This included reprogramming software applications used to retrieve documents on the Official Document System to make them accessible on tablet devices and smart phones. It also involved developing applications for displaying and searching news articles from the United Nations News Centre portal on specific tablet devices.

V. Conclusions

63. The Department continued to provide high-quality public information materials through traditional media — radio, television, photo and print — while working to expand its audience reach through creative partnerships with broadcasters and news outlets and the development of innovative programming and by ensuring that increasing numbers of products are available in different languages.

64. The Department has also been working to enhance its online platforms, including through a new design for the United Nations News Centre in all six official languages, a new website for radio programming in Bangla and such improvements as the inclusion of more multimedia materials on all of its news and media websites.

65. Efforts to harness the power of social media in all six official languages have yielded impressive results in terms of reaching new audiences around the world and in directing viewers to the Department's traditional media products. As a result of the frequent and consistent posting of diverse information materials, the number of social media followers has increased in all of the Department's news and media accounts in different languages. Its growing Chinese-language Weibo account, with close to 3 million followers, is now the largest social media account of the United Nations.

66. Throughout the reporting period, the Department worked to ensure that its news and media coverage and services continued uninterrupted during the renovations under the capital master plan. It also actively prepared for the return to the Secretariat building by working with Secretariat partners to ensure that the forthcoming introduction of the media asset management system and the establishment of a permanent broadcast facility would enhance the Organization's capacity to provide timely news coverage. The planned co-location of key content producers in the new offices is expected to promote synergies in editorial and production processes, further enabling the Department to develop new and innovative programming in all media.